

PATRICK H. PEARSE

A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE

By "COLIN"

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PATRICK H. PEARSE

CHAPTER I.

IT is possible, by showing the sort of man Pearse was, to bring people to understand why he planned and led an insurrection. The virtues and the faults in his character will both help us to an understanding of him, and to understand Pearse is to understand, in a great measure, how the insurrection came to happen. Those who knew the man intimately liked him much, even when his shortcomings stood out in stark plainness before their eyes. He was a man of great industry during his life, an orderly man who inspired reverence for the Creator and for rightful authority in the pupils of his school. He scarcely knew the taste of intoxicating drinks, never used tobacco, and was entirely free from the foibles and vices of young men. One who knew him well and mourns him deeply, though quietly, has summed up the weak (or was it the strong ?) side of his character in one sentence : " He could never wait," said she in reference to an enterprise entirely unconnected with the rebellion. This criticism of Pearse accuses him of being impractical. In some things he was undoubtedly impractical, but, generally, he was a most practical man, and a hard worker. He had graduated in the Royal University, become a barrister, a lecturer in Irish in the Catholic University College, and editor of a weekly paper, before he was twenty-five years of age. These attainments are not evidence of idle years spent in youthful dreaming. He became, early in life, the chief support of his family, for his father had died while Padraic was little more than a boy. Many considered him impractical because of his financial undertakings in connection with St. Enda's College, and when the rebellion occurred the same people shook their heads and said : " I told you so." His financial undertakings for the college were not, indeed, very big at any time, and if he was imprudent in attempting to shoulder the responsibilities which they involved, his imprudence was due to too great a faith in those of his countrymen who were in a position to support St. Enda's. To draw an analogy from his financial troubles in connection with the college and apply it to his defeat in the rebellion would not be fair to him, even if we had all the circumstances in mind, which most of us cannot have, because Pearse looked on rebellion not with a view to palpable success, but from a rare point of view which arose from a belief in the necessity and virtue of sacrifice.

CHAPTER II.

PATRICK H. PEARSE was born in Dublin on November 10th, 1879. At the time of his execution, May 3, 1916, he was six months short of thirty-seven years. His father was an Englishman, a sculptor, who had settled in Dublin. The father's work in stone and marble, and that of his second son, William Pearse, was of a distinctive character, showing that their chisel was worked with artistic sympathy and imagination. Art may have broadened his sympathies before he came to take an interest in human liberty, but the influence of both art and politics on his mind and feelings was a good one. He was an advanced Radical, and was a personal friend of the famous Bradlaugh. He appears to have been a man of broad and quick sympathies, and he took an intelligent and deep interest in Irish politics. He was an artist with more than a commercial interest in art, and we need not be in doubt regarding the sort of influence which such a man would exercise over his sons in their character and training. There have been in every generation since first the English gained a footing in Ireland a few Englishmen who recognised the justice of Ireland's struggle against their country. The father of Patrick H. Pearse seems to have been one of those few just Englishmen. Only once did the writer hear Padraic speak of his father, but he spoke of him then with a warm admiration for his liberal views on political freedom, and mentioned that he had written and published a pamphlet or two.

Mrs. Pearse, Padraic's mother, is an Irishwoman who comes of Gaelic stock. It was from her people that Padraic, while a boy, first drank of Irish lore and legend and learned of the memories which the struggles of '98 and other days had left after them in Meath. His mother is a woman of great affection and of never failing concern for the members of her family. She is not a demonstrative woman, and has a ways been so industrious that visitors to her house or to the school got little opportunity of knowing her. But she was always with Padraic, in heart and in deed, in the pursuit of his ideals. To her, and to her people, he would often attribute his own Irish feelings. He set great value by that feeling of patriotism from which, rather than from deep knowledge, the right

instinct arose. He more than once alluded in his writings to the manner in which that feeling was implanted in his breast while he sat as a boy at an old-fashioned fireside listening to grey-haired, warm-hearted old men relating stories of Ireland's past.

Padraic's home was an enlightened one where art, literature and music were held in high esteem. Drama was a favourite subject of general study and conversation. There were frequent visits to the theatre, especially when any of Shakespeare's plays was produced. The young Pearses were taught declamation, and Padraic, in particular, possessed, even early in life, a reverence for order and dignity in speech and in affairs. In the last few years of his life he developed into an orator of great force, with power to impress and sway an audience without resorting to any of the tricks of the popular speaker. During his University days he was very reserved in manner. This characteristic he retained to the end amongst all who were not intimate friends, but in his own family he would be talkative, amusing, and even caustically critical of people. That he could win the confidence of children, in particular, is plain from his stories in Irish, and the influence which he exercised over his boys in St. Enda's could only have been gained by the natural gifts of sympathy and understanding. When a very young man he was exact, and even stylish, in his dress. He wore a tall hat on occasions, and is said to have gone to some meetings of the Gaelic League executive in that dignified head gear. His failing for style was not a vanity, nor was it due to snobbery. It was very short-lived, and the tall hat was soon discarded. It was in the old University College, where Dr. Hogan, S.J., continued in a worthy way the Gaelic tradition created there by O'Curry, that Pearse came into intimate touch with Gaelic literature. He had from the first a great sympathy for all things Irish, but the atmosphere and romance of the old literature in book and manuscript powerfully attracted him. He pursued the study of Irish with great industry, until his mind became saturated with the hero-spirit of the Cuhullain saga and of the Fenian tales. He acquired the spoken language, and paid frequent visits to the Irish-speaking districts of Connacht, which he afterwards came to love, and where, in turn, an affection for him grew up amongst the people. Difference of opinion has existed about the authenticity of the Gaelic spirit in his original stories in Irish, but his knowledge of the language and

literature was deep and exact. Few Fenian tales have been better edited than his editions of "Bodach an Chota Lachtna" and "Bruidhean Chaorthainn." He founded a society for the study of Irish literature, and published in a slender volume a number of lectures which he had delivered before the society. He became a Law student, and won his B.L. degree, but the Bar had no attraction for him, and it is not surprising when his student days were over to find him taking up the editorship of the Gaelic League weekly paper. Henceforth his life was to be spent in the service of Ireland.



CHAPTER III.

PEARSE had become a good Gaelic scholar and an enthusiastic supporter of the Irish language revival before he became editor of the Gaelic League paper. He was elected to the editorship in the year 1903. The League was then young and vigorous, and Padraic in his youth and character was more representative of its spirit than several of its more prominent leaders. The mark of the enthusiast was on everything he wrote. A homely phrase in an old song from Donegal or Galway, a line in a poem conveying a spiritual conception of nationality, or an Irish phrase charged with feeling for kindred or country, would set him dreaming and—working, for he was ever working out his dreams into realities. He definitely adopted Connacht Irish, and his visits to the West were frequent, but the virus of provincialism which had entered so largely into others never touched him. He was at all times thinking so much of Ireland that he could never become a provincialist. His inspiration was national, and he would not be moved to antagonism or enthusiasm by peculiarity of grammar or idiom. His Irish and his scholarship were for a long time despised by critics whom he regarded as cranks or pedants, and whose writings were to him stodgy, while his own were clearer and more suggestive if less

idiomatic. There was in the League a great enthusiasm for the teaching of Irish, but there was little knowledge of teaching method, and no one seemed to have any philosophy of education. Dr. Hyde's enthusiasm was that of a poet. He was a great inspiring force, and it was just as well that he never visualised the problem of training teachers in a new language, of training them so that they might easily make Irish a living tongue in the schools. Pearse soon became the practical man of the League. He studied education and Gaelic ideals in education. He wrote enthusiastically on improved methods of language teaching, on the influence of native and national inspiration in literature, and on the place and use of history in education. He went to Belgium and studied the two-language system of education there. He led the big fight for the raising of Irish into a "teaching" language in the primary schools, and though he lived to see his victory denounced as a sham, the bilingual schools still mark the only great advance made in the language movement during the past fifteen years. Dr. Hyde and Eoin McNeill were by far the two biggest personalities in the movement. They were, and still are, thoroughly Irish, but neither of them had the gift of working out in detail the new teaching methods which were necessary if Irish was to be saved. Pearse was a highly gifted teacher, and study, instinct and observation, stood him in good stead of long experience. He became the pioneer of teaching through the medium of Irish. He discovered and became the friend of almost every teacher who was able and willing to use Irish as a medium of instruction. His method of carrying on propaganda seldom included the fierce denunciation, to which we are accustomed in politics, of all who did not see eye to eye with him. His faith in self-reliance was so great that he appeared to care more for a little patriotism among the teachers than for the reform of the National Board. At executive meetings he never spoke much, but he was the strong rather than the extreme man in regard to policy, because he was the only man with a policy. It was not until he was about to resign his post in the League, in 1909, that he allowed the fierce hatred of English rule, which later grew (on or in) him, to get hold of him. Until that hatred grew in him—and it developed only when he had made a

close study of the political side of Irish history—he had been a genial and tolerant critic of the education system which had anglicised three-fourths of Ireland. He could never in his Gaelic League days call any Irisman a traitor, and his belief in the good faith of officials led him occasionally into blunders, as when in “An Claidheamh Soluis,” he thanked Chief Secretary Bryce for his services on behalf of the Irish language; but it must be admitted that his informing propaganda and his high standards in controversy contributed greatly to the growth of the language movement, and to the advance of Irish in education. He could, however, “hit out” in controversy, and was never a blind fighter, but would sit down in the best of humour to write a “fierce” reply to his opponents. “How best can I confound them?—that is the question I usually put myself,” he explained, with a malicious grin. His controversies made him many friends, and a few enemies. The influence of the movement on himself was deep and profound. It led him at first to a great love of Ireland and of the people. His contact with men representative of all creeds and parties in Ireland, led him to a better understanding of his country, and to a keener appreciation of the problems that beset her.

Between his period of work in the Gaelic League and the insurrection of 1916 there intervenes his teaching work at St. Enda's. It was, in his own estimation, the most important work of his life. It was remarkable of him that he was always willing to devote himself wholly, or even to sacrifice himself, to his dominant enthusiasm. His Gaelic studies led him into the Gaelic League, to which he gave six years of splendid service. His study of the problem of the language revival led him to establish St. Enda's, from which he never drew a year's salary. His reading in modern Irish history led him into political action, into the Volunteers, into the insurrection. But it was the spirit of patriotism, the love of Ireland, that created his enthusiasm, and directed the course and end of his life.



CHAPTER IV.

(This chapter is an extract from Pearse's pamphlet on education. It clearly shows the ideals which guided him in his work at St. Edna's).

THE words and phrases of a language are always, to some extent, revelations of the mind of the race that has moulded the language. How often does an Irish vocable light up, as with a lantern, some immemorial Irish attitude, some whole phase of Irish thought! Thus, the words which the old Irish employed when they spoke of education, show that they had gripped the very heart of that problem. To the old Irish the teacher was *aite*, "fosterer," the pupil was *dalta*, foster child; the system was *aiteachas*, "fosterage"; words which we still retain as *oide*, *dalta*, *oideachas*.

And is it not the precise aim of education to "foster"? Not to inform, to indoctrinate, to conduct through a course of studies (though these be the dictionary meanings of the word), but, first and last, to "foster" the elements of character native to a soul, to help to bring these to their full perfection rather than to implant exotic excellences.

Fosterage implies a foster-father or foster-mother—a person—as its centre and inspiration rather than a code of rules. Modern education systems are elaborate pieces of machinery devised by highly-salaried officials for the purpose of turning out citizens according to certain approved patterns. The modern school is a State-controlled institution designed to produce workers for the State, and is in the same category with a dockyard or any other State-controlled institution which produces articles necessary to the progress, well-being, and defence of the State. We speak of the "efficiency," the "cheapness," and the "up-to-dateness" of an education system just as we speak of the "efficiency," the "cheapness," and the "up-to-dateness" of manufacturing coal-gas. We shall soon reach a stage when we shall speak of the "efficiency," the "cheapness," and the "up-to-dateness" of our systems of soul-saving. We shall hear it said, "Salvation is very cheap in England," or "The Germans are wonderfully efficient in prayer," or "Gee, it takes a New York parson to hustle ginks into heaven."

Now education is as much concerned with souls as religion is. Religion is a Way of Life, and education is a preparation of the soul to live its life here and hereafter; to live it nobly and fully, and as we cannot think of a religion without a Person as its centre, as we cannot

think of a church without its Teacher, so we cannot think of a school without its Master. A school, in fact, according to the wise conception of our wise ancestors, was less a place than a little group of persons, a teacher and his pupils. Its place might be poor, nay, it might have no local habitation at all, it might be peripatetic; where the master went the disciples followed. One may think of Our Lord and His friends as a sort of school; was He not the Master, and were they not his disciples?

I do not know how far it is possible to revive the old ideal of fosterer and foster-child, I know it is very desirable. One sees too clearly that the modern system, under which the teacher tends more and more to become a mere civil servant, is making for the degradation of education, and will end in irreligion and anarchy. The modern child is coming to regard his teacher as an official paid by the State to render him certain services; services which it is in his interest to avail of, since by doing so he will increase his earning capacity later on; but services the rendering and acceptance of which no more imply a sacred relationship than do the rendering and acceptance of the services of a dentist or chiropodist. There is thus coming about a complete reversal of the relative positions of master and disciple, a tendency which is increased by every statute that is placed on the statute book, by every rule that is added to the education code of modern countries. Against this trend I would oppose the ideal of those who shaped the Gaelic polity nearly two thousand years ago. It is not merely that the old Irish had a good education system; they had the best and noblest that has ever been known among men. There has never been known any human institution more adequate to its purpose than that which, in pagan times, produced Cuchulainn and the Boy-Corps of Eamhain Macha, and, in Christian times, produced Enda and the companions of his solitude in Aran. The old Irish system, pagan and Christian, possessed in pre-eminent degree the thing most needful in education; an adequate inspiration. Colmcille suggested what that inspiration was when he said: "If I die it shall be from the excess of the love I bear the Gael." A love and a service so excessive as to annihilate all thought of self, a recognition that one must give all, must be willing always to make the ultimate sacrifice--this is the inspiration alike of the story of Cuchullain and of the story of Colmcille, the inspiration that made one a hero and the other a saint.

CHAPTER V.

PEARSE'S interpretation of the Gaelic League gospel was not the narrow one insisted on by those who regard the organisation as a linguistic society. The language revival meant to Pearse the revival of national life. The mere teaching of Irish in schools was not the end at which he aimed; he wanted all education Gaelicised and reformed, so that it might become the fosterer of his new ideal Irish race, and he wanted so much to be one of the schoolmasters that he founded St. Enda's. In the first number of the school magazine he explained his purpose.

"I am conscious of one motive only, namely, a great love of boys, of their ways, of their society; and a desire born of that love to help as many boys as possible to become good men . . . and as my definition of a good man, as applied to an Irishman, includes the being a good Irishman (for you cannot make an Irish boy a good Englishman or a good Frenchman), and as my definition of learning, as applied to an Irishman, includes Irish learning as its basis and fundament, it followed that my school should be an Irish school in a sense not known or dreamt of in Ireland since the Flight of the Earls.

"What I mean by an Irish school is a school that takes Ireland for granted. You need not praise the Irish language—simply speak it; you need not denounce English games—play Irish ones; you need not ignore foreign history, foreign literatures—deal with them from the Irish point of view. An Irish school need no more be a purely Irish-speaking school than an Irish nation need be a purely Irish-speaking nation; but an Irish school, like an Irish nation, must be permeated through and through by Irish culture, the repository of which is the Irish language."

Pearse had a genius for school organisation, as he had for the control of boys. His assistants in the school were men fired with his own enthusiasm, and great success was achieved even in the first year. The discipline of the boys was good, and it was maintained not by the threat of physical punishment, but by trusting them, by putting them on their honour. Plays and pageants were produced, not so much for display as for the purpose of giving the boys new experiences, to stir their imaginations and develop

their tastes and character. Financial difficulties led to increasing troubles with the school, but Pearse remained the ideal master of the boys, and he laboured heroically to keep the school going and free it from debt. He would most likely have succeeded had he not been drawn into the political movement.

But his spirit was not daunted by the handicap placed on him by the school debt. There was joy for him as well as for the boys in the study hall, in the school theatre, and on the play ground. He found pride even in the routine work of teaching. His joyous record of the educational work in St. Enda's is to be found in the four numbers of "An Macaomh." The burden of the building debts told against the successful working out of his educational plans and ideals. There were, after the first few years, frequent changes in the staff, and the advent of new masters made it difficult to permeate the whole school with the Gaelic atmosphere which he certainly succeeded in creating. He was fully conscious of the importance of his work, and felt keenly the failure, or refusal, of many people famous in the language movement to lend him any practical assistance. Some good friends he had, and they were also the staunchest fighters in the Gaelic League. But he was never discouraged. St. Enda's produced a change in his manner and disposition. It made him more genial, more sociable and companionable. He did not lose his love of fine conversation, and the masters who sat with him at the head of refectory table found it easy to "draw" him on general subjects. His wit could be very caustic, and his sly criticisms of people who took themselves too seriously were often delightful to hear. Those who knew and understood him and valued his work must for ever regret the tragic break in the development, under his guidance, of the splendid system of education which he revived. Pearse was a big man, but we did not know it. In a free nation, conscious of its nationality, and knowing the value of education, he would be honoured with power and position.



CHAPTER VI.

PEARSE'S writings in Irish belong largely to the period of his official connection with the Gaelic League.

"Iosagan," his first volume of stories, was published in 1907. "An Mhathair," is a volume of similar stories which were mostly written about the same year. They represent a period of his development as an author. The language of both volumes he had learned from the mouths of men and children in South Connemara. Its great beauty lies in its clearness and simplicity. The life represented in the tales is the simple peasant life of Connacht, which he loved to idealise. The idealisation is, perhaps, overdone, and good, unprejudiced critics say that Pearse sometimes in his stories approached the sentimental, a fault which they hold to be entirely foreign to Gaelic literature. But the fact remains that "Iosagan" has enjoyed a wider circle of readers than most books in modern Irish. Pearse had little time for story-writing at St. Enda's. His studies in modern Irish history turned his thoughts to things political, and his writings found a new inspiration. After leaving the Gaelic League he became a great student of Tone, and of Mitchell, and when you met him in a tram, or on a short holiday in the country, you generally noticed that he carried with him a book. It was generally "Speeches from the Dock," or some similar volume. He had, in the first years of St. Enda's, no affiliation with any political organisation, and he attempted in 1912 or '13 to found a new movement, which would carry on political propaganda in Irish. He published a brilliant little weekly paper, "An Barr Buadh," which ran for eleven weeks. Its articles were in Irish, and most of them were written by the editor. The politics of the paper were those for which Pearse died. At the same time he founded a political society, "Cumann na Saoirse," which met a few times, but did not survive the paper. Political developments affected Pearse in more ways than one. They made him impatient with the prospects of Home Rule, and his impatience made him turn from Irish to English as a medium for his political thoughts. His Irish audience was small; he hungered to address the crowd. He contributed to "Irish Freedom," and began the authorship of his re-

markable series of political pamphlets. His English was clear, strong, and rich in illustration. The pamphlets contain brilliant writing, so brilliant that some reviewers began to speak of Pearse as a new Mitchell.

His poetry in Irish was written during the St. Enda's period. It consists of about a dozen short pieces, some of them containing only a few lines. It is a personal poetry with a strong spiritual inspiration, and in feeling it is as intense as his political feeling. When the poetry was published some who were not in close touch with its author believed that its high note was not a sincere one, but his subsequent career and end cleared their minds of doubt, and brought shame to their hearts. The high note of "Suantraighe and Goltraighe," was felt and lived by Pearse. He was never demonstrative in regard to his feelings, but, like other rare souls, his spiritual feelings were intense, while, unlike many poets who have given the world some of its richest spiritual poetry, he was a complete stranger to vice of any kind.

The personal note in the following poem is like the cry of pain.

CAO ÉUIGE DOM' ÉIAPAD.

CAO ÉUIGE ÓIB' DOM' ÉIAPAD, A MÍANA MO ÉIPIÓE?
DOM' ÉIAPAC IP' DOM' ÉIANAD VE LÓ IP' D'OIÚC',
DOM' ÉIADAC MAI VO ÉIADÓCÁIDE ÉIAD BOÉT AN ÉIAD,
ÉIAD BOÉT PAO-TUIPIEAC 'P AN ÉONAIPT I NA ÉIAD.

NÍL ÉUAINNEAR DOM' ÉIANAR I N-UIGNEAR NA ÉCNOE,
AC UALL-ÉÁIPI NA ÉIADÁIDE ZO NUATÁIPI LE CLOP,
UALL-ÉÁIPI MO MÍAN-PA DOM' ÉIADAC ZAN ÉPÁR,—
'S A ÉONA ÉIAP-ÉIACLAÇA, IP' PAOA BUIPI ÉÁR.

NÍL ÉÁPÁI I NOÁN DOM' MÍANAIÉ LEM' ÉÉ,
ÓIPI NÍ ÉÁPÁI AN ÉÁPÁI VO MÍANAR INOÉ,
'S IP' ÉIOPAIÉ AN ÉONAIPT VEN ÉPÁIPI VO ÉUAIPI—
'S ZO ÉIOPAIÉ NÍ ÉOULÓCÁO ZO ÉOULUIÉAO ÉAN UAIÉ.

The poetry might be said to mark the second period of his authorship. It marks also a psychological change. He turned while at St. Enda's from the contemplation of child life among Connacht folk to the contemplation of self, and his little sheaf of poems gives us a deep insight into his own character. The political writings mark a third

period which overlaps the second somewhat. They are full of his passionate love of Ireland, whom he would visualise as a sovereign, high-souled nation, and to whom he gave the love and reverence which a saint might give his God.

When the die was cast and death awaited him he wrote in prison the following poem, which has the introspection and sadness of his Irish poetry. The fight was over. Hatred of his foes who were about to slay him had left him. He was himself again, but without the bright hopes of youth. Who can say what patriots feel?—

THE WAYFARER.

The beauty of this world hath made me sad:
This beauty that will pass;
Sometimes my heart hath shaken with great joy
To see a leaping squirrel in a tree,
Or a red lady-bird upon a stalk,
Or little rabbits in a field at evening
Lit by a starring sun;
On some green hill, where shadows drifting by,
Some quietude, where mountainy men had sown,
And some would reap, near to the gate of heaven;
Or children with bare feet upon the sands of some ebb'd sea,
Or playing on the streets of little towns in Connacht—
Things young and happy.
And then my heart hath told me
These will pass!
Will pass and change, will die and be no more,
Things bright and green, things young and happy,
And I have gone upon my way—sorrowful.

Pearse's reputation as an orator has been spoken of. His speeches differed greatly from the graceless and bombastic orations of Irish platforms. He spoke with seeming difficulty, as a rule, but with style, and he used the fixed precise expressions of a man of deep reading and of definite opinions. He had considerable practice as a speaker in Irish. The Volunteer movement discovered in him a great speaker in English. His speech in the Rotunda Rink at the founding of the Volunteers was startling and powerful in its flights. His funeral oration over the grave of O'Donovan Rossa has become a classic.

CHAPTER VII.

PEARSE was not a politician in the commonly accepted sense of the word. He was impatient of party, and he detested the bartering which goes on between English and Irish parties. He was a Nationalist in the fullest sense long before he came into association with the "extreme" or Republican group, and he joined that group because he believed that it was the only one that would offer any protest in action against English rule. You will not find in his writings any economic, sectarian, or party reasoning of the case for Home Rule. His arguments for Irish freedom were always based on Ireland's sovereign right to freedom, and they were addressed to Irishmen rather than to their English rulers. The party trickery over Home Rule made him exclaim a year before the Volunteers were founded, "If they trick us this time I'll lead a rebellion myself." Events in Ireland, and outside of it, made rebellion possible. Pearse became one of the founders of the Irish Volunteers. He was one of their most active organisers, and it is evident from his last pamphlet, "The Sovereign People," that he held the belief that the Volunteers should strike on the first opportunity. It was not his policy to wait for attack. Whether the Easter Rising was precipitated from within, or from without by impending Government action, it is not possible now to state in a way that would carry general conviction. Pearse was the biggest man, and the most influential, in the revolutionary section of the Volunteers, and he was committed to a policy of fight. Whether judged by his writings and speeches, by his actions, or by his declarations to intimate friends, it is not unfair to him to conclude that he had committed himself to revolution. The granting of a decent measure of Home Rule would undoubtedly have prevented that decision, but in the political circumstances of Easter, 1916, the most natural thing on earth for a man of Pearse's temperament and tendencies was to revolt. He had in his writings on Education always preached the gospel of self-sacrifice. When he began to urge Irishmen to prepare for action he preached the same gospel. For himself, he had accepted that gospel in the fullest sense. Working with him were men very different from him in ability, influence

and character, but committed, like himself, to extreme measures, and accepting the gospel of sacrifice as fully as he did. Irishmen are so used to insincerity in politics that they now seldom expect sincerity in leaders of any party. Pearse was terribly sincere. That is why he revolted. And he would have revolted had he entertained no hope of success, for he believed that the spilling of blood and the giving of life would save the cause of Irish freedom. This pamphlet does not purport to give a history or a justification of the rebellion. The writer's aim has been to explain the character of Pearse, who was by far the most powerful man among the leaders of the Easter Rising, and anyone who understands his character, and appreciates his sincerity through life, will easily understand how he became leader of an insurrection.

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